



Media Release

21 May 2018

Australia's voting at the 28th Special Session of the UNHRC against a resolution to establish an independent commission of inquiry is immoral, provocative and contrary to international law.

During the 28th Special Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on Friday 18 May, the Australian government decided to vote with the United States in opposing a resolution that seeks to establish the facts surrounding the killing of more than 100 unarmed Palestinian civilians since 30 March, most notably in the Gaza Strip, and to offer recommendations to safeguard Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

It is disappointing that Australia, which sought membership in this Council on the grounds that it would uphold international human rights law, has neglected this promise in favour of Israeli exceptionalism. Amnesty International says it is 'appalled' with Australia's decision, adding that it's on 'the wrong side of history.'

If Israel's 'singling out' at UN institutions is unjustified and tiresome, as Australia and the US maintain, then so is its unending, illegal and demoralising occupation – reason enough for its being isolated and condemned at international fora. If Israel desires real legitimacy and fair-mindedness from the international community, then it first needs to extend these rights to the people whom it occupies. Regular condemnation may indeed be tiresome and exceptional, but it is only the result of an equally tiresome and exceptional occupation.

Most concerning, however, is Australia's failing to take an intellectually critical stand. In opposing this independent UN investigation, Australia admits that it is satisfied with the Israeli line, which is most likely self-serving and specious. Like its Spanish and Belgian counterparts, Australia should have voted for third-party, evidence-based findings, not settle for one-sided political narratives. If recent protests in the Gaza Strip were in fact Hamas-led provocations, then this commission of inquiry will come to such a conclusion.

While not surprising, Australia's ongoing efforts to uncritically echo America's foreign policy goals are certainly troubling. The government of the State of Palestine deeply regrets Australia's position and urges it to vote in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions in the future, the very thing membership of this Council should entail.

For more information, please contact:

H.E. Mr Izzat Abdulhadi

Ambassador of the State of Palestine

Phone: 0404444410